Presidium of the National Day commemorative meeting.

Premier Pham Van Dong's SPEECH AT NATIONAL DAY MEETING

(Full text)

Esteemed President Ho Chi Minh,
Dear comrades and friends,
Dear fellow-countrymen and fighters,

TODAY, our entire people are celebrating the 23rd anniversary of the victory of the great August Revolution and the founding of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the first worker-peasant State in the history of our country, at a moment when our struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation is making headway by leaps and bounds under the impetus of the resounding victories in the Spring of 1968.

"THERE IS NOTHING MORE PRECIOUS THAN INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM"*

FOR the first time in our history, the whole Vietnamese people have, under the leadership of our Party, risen up by the millions and, as masters of their own destiny, have been closing their ranks in the defence of the gains of the August Revolution in the preservation and development of the people's democracy which is the whole nation's as well as everyone's material and spiritual resources for the fulfilment of the revolutionary tasks the most urgent of which is the present fight against the U.S. imperialists' aggression, for the safeguard of national independence.

In their multi-millenary history, the Vietnamese people have time and again resisted foreign invasions and never failed to carry the day in a glorious manner. From time immemorial, for the Vietnamese people, the most sacred, the deepest and most fervid feelings have been love for their native places, their Fatherland, love for their fellow-countrymen, national pride, independence and sovereignty, a staunch and indomitable spirit, a boundless confidence in their certain victory. At that time, even under the monarchical regime, whenever the Fatherland was in danger, the people rose up to a man against the aggressors to save the country and fought with self-sacrifice dozens of years until victory. But, each time the gains fell into the hands of the feudal class, while the fighters sank back into their hopeless plight plagued by exploitation and oppression.

But things are quite different today. Since the August Revolution and the founding of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, our country and our nation have undergone a sweeping and radical change. Today, our country belongs to our people, today our people are for ever masters of their own destiny. Today the feelings that bind the Vietnamese people in general and every Vietnamese in particular to their native places, to their Fatherland, the love for their fellow-countrymen, their comrades, the staunch and indomitable spirit constantly kept alive by the consciousness that "there is nothing more precious than independence and freedom," their pride in the past national achievements, and even to a greater extent in the present and future common accomplishments now that their beloved Fatherland has become a land of socialism, all these sentiments are instilling into the entire Vietnamese people revolutionary heroism which is firing them into a victorious fight against the enemy.

There has been among our people a deep awareness of the close connections between the August Revolution and the founding of the D.R.V.N. 23 years ago and the struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation at present. Let us recall the Declaration of Independence which President Ho Chi Minh, the great leader of our nation, proclaimed on September 2, 1945 to our people and the world's peoples: "Viet Nam has the right to be a free and independent country—and in fact is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and freedom."

The first time, we successfully fought our great war of resistance against the French colonialists. We began it with only bamboo spears as weapons in prodigiously heroic South Viet Nam and brought it to a victorious end at Dien Bien Phu and at the Geneva Conference in 1954. The first war of resistance enhanced manifold our people's unity and fighting power, the prestige of the D.R.V.N., steeled a strong people's army and supplied our people with extremely valuable experiences on people's war against imperialist aggression.

After victory, many big tasks were awaiting our people: construction of the North, and preparations for national reunification which should have been achieved in July 1956 as stipulated by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam and which was our people's logical desert.

But the U.S. gangsters came!

And the Vietnamese people have had to wage their second patriotic war, against the U.S. aggressors, first in the South, then, since 1965, in the whole country.

Understandably, the U.S. imperialists' war of aggression in our country far exceeds in size and intensity the French colonialists' war. Though it is a "local war" or a "limited war" for the United States, it is in fact a big war in which are deployed huge U.S. military and financial forces and which has been causing a great turmoil in the American society and great difficulties to the U.S. rulers. We must be aware of all the tremendous efforts exerted by the U.S. imperialists in their war of aggression against our country, mainly against South Viet Nam, with a population of 14 million and an area of 170,000 square kilometres. In terms of total troops strength, weapons and ammunition used in South Viet Nam year after year, it is the biggest and fiercest war in the world! For all his colossal military machine, however, the enemy has been suffering defeat after defeat and his setbacks have been growing in proportions to his escalation. As for our people they have won repeated victories, and their strength has been increasing at the same rate as their successes. By this way, the great war of resistance of our people against the U.S. aggressors will certainly end in complete victory!

Our people's achievements show that in our era, a country with a medium-sized population and territory and a still undeveloped economy, but with a people closely united and determined to fight along a correct line, is fully capable of defeating any aggressor, even if he is U.S. imperialism. This conclusion constitutes a source of confidence and a tremendous encouragement to the Vietnamese people as well as to the peoples of the world who are struggling for independence and freedom.

A BIG LEAP IN OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST U.S. AGGRESSION

Dear comrades and friends,

"KNOWING our enemy and ourselves, we are sure to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles." That is the immutable axiom of war. In their struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, the Vietnamese people have so far been successful because they always go by this principle. From now on, they should all the more do so in order to win total victory. "Knowing the enemy" here means knowing the U.S. imperialist

* *Subheads are ours*—Ed.

aggressors and comprehensively and deeply grasping all their weak points — weak points on the battlefield as well as in their country, weak points in their international relations, weak points which are very basic and unpremeditable and which we must turn to account. At the same time, we must bear in mind that we are dealing with U.S. imperialism — the world's present richest and most powerful with huge military and economic potentials, and also the most reactionary force of our time, and the international gendarme; and that, because of all this, the U.S. imperialists are very stubborn and will cling as long as they can to their policy of aggression against our country. "Knowing ourselves" means a basic, all-round and deep knowledge of our people's strong points, the strong points of the arduous, protracted but certainly victorious people's war, the strong points of the patriotic war, radiant with justice and warmly supported by the peoples of the socialist countries and the other peoples in the world including the progressive people in the U.S. It means we must promote, unceasingly and to the utmost, our strength and our strong position and, on this basis, make every effort to overcome our weak points and shortcomings in all fields, thereby increasing our force and successes as the fight goes on, and finally overpowering the enemy and winning total victory. In a word, the process of rapid and uninterrupted development of the people's war in Viet Nam is that of a high development of the science and art of a type of revolutionary war in this era to defeat the U.S. imperialist aggressors, the sworn enemy of our people and the world's peoples.

The *Tet* general offensive and simultaneous uprisings constituted a big leap in our people's struggle against U.S. aggression, and a new advance of the science and art of people's war.

Six months have elapsed since the *Tet* dramatic victories. These were months and days of very gallant fighting, of unprecedented heroic successes. And it was precisely in this period of revolutionary high tide that our people drew new and unusually diverse experiences concerning our knowledge of the enemy and of ourselves, which have led us to a hundred victories in a hundred battles.

Everyone in our country and many people in the world are well aware that the *Tet* general offensive and simultaneous uprisings have ushered in a new period in the war, and brought about a new strategic situation highly favourable to our people and critically inauspicious for the enemy. Not long ago, the U.S. brass hats in Saigon and Washington whipped up a ballyhoo about the "successes" of their "search and destroy" and "pacification" strategy, but it is clear that these were only figments of their imagination. Just as they were exulting over their imaginary "successes," all of a sudden, crushing blows rained on their 1.2 million troops who consequently were driven into a passive and defensive position with no way out, and were encircled right in their military and political centres and their bases, big and small. Ever since, they have been beaten continually and been receiving dagger thrusts from the outside. More disastrous still, they have also been strongly attacked from within. It is therefore obvious that the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation has brought into full play its strategic, tactical and operational initiative, and has driven the enemy into a passive position in all fields, and forced them to pull back only to expect more blows likely to come from any direction and at any time (1).

In such a predicament, though the strength of the enemy is still great, his position is losing one, his morale is sinking, and his internal dissensions are aggravating, which is bringing on him irremediable setbacks. This is a golden opportunity for the South Vietnamese armed forces and people to step up their simultaneous offensives and uprisings everywhere to score yet bigger military and political victories.

What is the strategy of the enemy now?

Quietly his "search-and-destroy" and "pacification" strategy has been shelved. It is necessary to recall that to carry out this piratical strategy, the U.S. aggressors put into operation a military machine composed of crack units of the United States: the Air Mobile Cavalry, the Marines, airborne troops, motorized forces, the Seventh Fleet, and aircraft of all kinds and types based in South Viet Nam and many places around our country. In face of the invincible people's war in the South, however, the "search-and-destroy" and "pacification" strategy with such big forces proved quite unimaginative and ineffective, and only betrayed the wild dreams of the U.S. aggressors.

Now, the strategy of the enemy seems much more "realistic." It is to "hold and clear." And the only aim of "clearing" is "holding," or to "hold" at all costs. We shall see how they will "hold." For everybody still remembers how they once declared their "determination" to hold Khe Sanh. One wonders whether Khe Sanh was not a kind of writing on the wall for the U.S. expeditionary corps?

urban centres, even to Saigon, a deliberate policy of destruction and extermination already systematically applied in the countryside... The cultural legacy itself has been affected, which constitutes an irreparable loss not only for the Vietnamese nation but also for universal culture."

The new crimes accumulated by the U.S. aggressors have further exacerbated the South Vietnamese people's hatred, and urged them to wipe out the enemy. In the past two weeks, to mark the glorious commemorative day of the nation, the South Vietnamese armed forces and people have been launching series of concerted and vigorous attacks on hundreds of U.S. puppet bases, in Saigon, Da Nang, Hue — Thua Thien, Tay Ninh, Quang Tri, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, Quang Ngai, Qui Nhon, Pleiku, Kontum, Duc Lap (Darlac), Phan Rang, Phan Thiet, Loc Ninh, Bien Hoa, Ben Tre, My Tho, Can Tho, Sa Dec, Vinh Long, Soc Trang and dozens of other provincial and district towns in Quang Tri — Thua Thien, in the southern part of Central Viet Nam, on the High Plateaux, and in Nam Bo, and have recorded new, resounding victories, and paving the way for stronger attacks and bigger successes, and for complete final victory.

In North Viet Nam after U.S. President Johnson had to order the "limited bombing," the U.S. ruling circles have been using aircraft and warships in continual and fierce attacks on the provinces from Thanh Hoa to the Demilitarized Zone, that is on an important part of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. In this region, the daily average of enemy raids has nearly trebled compared with that on the whole of North Viet Nam previously. The number of targets has also been more than twice the total of targets hit in the previous period throughout North Viet Nam. B.52s coming in waves, for "carpet bombing," and aircraft of other types operating day and night, have used a much greater tonnage of bombs of all calibres, and combined all conceivable methods of attack and all available means of extermination to raze heavily populated areas, destroy water conservancy works and ripening rice-fields, in an attempt to strike at the people's source of life. This is a very perfidious political move and military calculation of the U.S. aggressors in their losing position. The result, however, is that the monthly average of U.S. aircraft shot down over North Viet Nam since the "limited bombing" came into effect has gone up by one and a half times and the losses of the U.S. aggressors have become heavier. Moreover, the more savage their crimes, the more their ruthlessness and perfidy become transparent to the peoples of the world.

In a word, the situation of the U.S. aggressors on the Viet Nam battlefield is very critical now. This has been reflected in various ways in public opinion in the United States, in the attitude of broad sections of Americans demanding an end to the "dirty" war in Viet Nam and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Viet Nam. This is a development very significant in its scope and depth, to such an extent that it has had a visible and direct effect on the current presidential election campaign in the United States.

The U.S. aggressors, however, stubbornly continue and step up their war of aggression in Viet Nam. They are striving to bring more American and satellite troops into South Viet Nam, and to consolidate the position, and increase the strength, of the puppet army and administration. They persist in their main war scheme: to hold on to South Viet Nam, carry out neo-colonialism there, prolong the partition of Viet Nam. All these intentions and schemes were overtly reaffirmed in the documents of the July Honolulu Conference between the U.S. and its stooges.

In such a situation, the South Viet Nam armed forces and people under the leadership of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation have been pushing up their fight on all battlefields and stepping up their offensives and uprisings in South Viet Nam in order to break the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists and crush the puppet army and administration and eventually to gain victory. Our entire people, of one mind and shoulder to shoulder, are impelling the struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation toward complete victory, are exerting greater efforts in the defence of the North, liberation of the South and the ultimate peaceful reunification of the country.

The Saigon puppets are creatures and instruments of the neo-colonialist war of aggression waged by the U.S. imperialists in the southern part of our country. From the Diem-Nhu brothers to the Thieu-Ky-Huong clique, all of them have served the aggressors and sold out their country and people. They are the object of the Vietnamese people's implacable hatred. Here, once again, we must completely expose the U.S.-puppets' "election," "constitution," "parliament" farces. All this is but a puppet show which can fool no one. It only reveals the true nature of the U.S.—puppets. The South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, and of late, the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, have both sternly condemned the Saigon puppet regime and called on the South Vietnamese people to resolutely overthrow it and, subsequently, shatter the aggressive will of the U.S.

On this occasion, we warmly welcome the recently announced Political Programme of the Alliance which represents a significant victory of the unity and struggle of our southern compatriots now resisting the U.S. war of aggression.

Our entire Vietnamese people are determined to fight till complete victory, until not a single U.S. aggressor is left in South Viet Nam, as has been made clear by the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation. That has always been the iron will of our 31 million compatriots. To translate it into deeds, the South Vietnamese armed forces and people have been fighting for over ten years, and the armed forces and people in the whole country have been fighting for four years now. The Vietnamese people have recorded big and glorious

(1) *The 8th Special Communique of the Command of the South Viet Nam People's Liberation Armed Forces issued on August 5, 1968, pointed out:*

"In 6 months, the Liberation Armed Forces and people in South Viet Nam killed, wounded or captured 380,000 enemy troops including 133,000 U.S. and satellite troops.

"In terms of units, they wiped out or heavily depleted 4 regiments, 16 armoured squadrons, one multi-battalion para-troop force, 123 battalions and 516 companies of the U.S.-puppets.

"In terms of war means, they:

— shot down or destroyed on the ground over 4,400 aircraft of all types,

— blasted 8,730 military vehicles including 4,560 tanks and armoured cars,

— sank or shot ablaze 580 combat launches and war vessels,

— razed 1,200 posts,

— destroyed over 700 guns,

— burned down nearly 500 storages of ammunition, gasoline and other war material,

— blew up over 550 bridges, and

— liberated millions of people in hundreds of villages."

(2) *The International Information Centre to Denounce War Crimes is the standing organ of the Bertrand Russell International Tribunal.*

THE U.S. AGGRESSORS ARE SLIDING HEADLONG INTO THE ABYSS OF CRIMES

As for "clearing", we know what and how the U.S. aggressors "clear." They have used shells, explosive bombs, napalm gas, toxic chemicals, and particularly, wave after wave of B.52s against over 130 cities, provincial capitals, district towns and surrounding areas, including Saigon, Hue and Da Nang, indiscriminately killing civilians, and reducing to ashes houses, fields, gardens and other property of the people. They have made every effort to destroy and level vast areas around their key bases, not sparing even a single living creature, a single house or a single tree. Thus since the beginning of this year, they have been piling up new crimes which by far exceed the odious crimes perpetrated by them in South Viet Nam for many years. But this is only the frantic convulsion of a beast hard hit and frightened, a beast that fears everything — the shadow of a human being, a bush, a hill. And this is the mood of the vanquished. That is why, like all previous strategies of the enemy, "hold-and-clear" is doomed to complete bankruptcy, and will invite upon the U.S. aggressors even heavier defeats. On July 15, 1968, the Committee to Denounce War Crimes Committed by the U.S. Imperialists and their Henchmen in South Viet Nam strongly condemned their new heinous crimes against the people of all strata in South Viet Nam. On July 10, 1968 the International Information Centre to Denounce War Crimes (2), issued a resolution in which it was pointed out: "The Centre has got the conviction that to cope with the legitimate uprising of the South Vietnamese people, the U.S. army and its subordinates have extended to

victories. Since *Tet*, our people's fight has entered a new period which is fraught with much greater possibilities and favourable conditions but on the other hand, greater hardships must be overcome and greater sacrifices must be made. We are well aware that our enemy is very obdurate. We must fight persistently and resolutely to defeat our enemy whatever his wicked schemes and methods and however fierce the war. In order to persist in the fight and be ready for all eventualities, our people must become stronger in all fields as they fight. This means that our entire people must be all the more courageous and intelligent, develop to the utmost their revolutionary heroism and the very large political and military potentials of people's war in the new period. This is very important to our entire country as well as to every battlefield and every unit. Our sacred struggle against U.S. aggression and for national salvation will certainly be crowned with complete victory, and at the same time will certainly bring about a vigorous growth of the nation and of the people's armed forces, and a further rise in the prestige and influence of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation. These objectives are hard to attain. But how important and inspiring they are!

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM, REVOLUTIONARY BASE OF THE NATION

Dear comrades and friends,

THE new period in the fight against U.S. aggression, for national salvation has brought out in bolder relief than ever the paramount part of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in the defence of the North, liberation of the South and gradual peaceful reunification of the nation.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam—which saw the light after the victorious August Revolution—crowned the long struggle for liberation carried out by our whole nation under the leadership of our Party. This achievement has been preserved at the cost of much blood of our people throughout the country, especially by the untold sacrifices of our Southern kith-and-kin for a quarter of this century. It has been developed by the courageous and creative labour of the people in the North during the years of peace as well as amidst the flames of war. The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is the revolutionary base of the whole country, the great rear area of the South, linking our people's fight against U.S. aggression, for national salvation with the cause of the mighty socialist system and the world's peoples. Each step forward of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is a heavy blow dealt at the U.S. imperialists' scheme of aggression, a victory of our nation in the struggle for independence and freedom. During four years of courageous and clever fighting, our people and armed forces in the North have been recording splendid achievements in a ground-to-air war which is of a size unheard of in history, and in this very test of war, the strength of the people and armed forces, the economic and defence potentials of the socialist North, have been unceasingly and rapidly grown. These successes are of great significance, they hearten the people throughout the country, give joy and confidence to the peoples of the world and have an important effect on the overall situation of the fight against U.S. aggression, for national salvation.

Since the beginning of this year, fired by the brilliant feats of arms of our people in the South, the people in the North have been marching impetuously forward, overcoming many difficulties and obstacles, combating enemy destruction and natural calamities — droughts, typhoons and floods — coping with enormous tasks at a time; defeating the U.S. war of destruction, getting ready to cope with any eventuality, continuing the building of socialism, and at the same time wholeheartedly fulfilling the obligations of the great rear area to the South, in order to defeat the U.S. aggression, defend national independence and freedom. The people in the former 4th interzone have been fighting with tenacity, giving a strong riposte to the cunning U.S. scheme of "limited bombing," stepping up all-sidedly production and the fighting, living up to the honour of standing "on the crests of the waves and at the points of the winds" in the socialist North and next door to the heroic great front. All strata of the people in the North have been enthusiastically engaged in emulation to carry out the 1968 State plan, to work wonder on the front of communications and transport, to develop agricultural production, to maintain and strengthen the centrally-run industry, particularly to step up the building and working of local industries, to keep prices stable in the main, to care for the people's welfare, to ensure rapid and steady progress in education, the training of cadres and cultural and medical activities. In the conditions of a bitter fight and an urgent tempo of production, our entire people have been further strengthening their unity and cohesion, and fighting with great valour, expressing the noblest thoughts and sentiments—optimism, enthusiasm and confidence.

Closely linking their daily work with the pressing and immediate tasks of the 1968 State plan, the people in the North have been carrying out simultaneously three revolutions and striving to put into effect the major policies of fundamental and far-reaching significance: developing local economies, improving economic management, first of all giving a higher degree of autonomy to provinces and cities, gradually raising the collective managerial standard of the labouring people in all facets of life.

In response to the sacred call of President Ho Chi Minh, the armed forces and people in the North should make every effort to impel forward patriotic emulation, namely the "determined to defeat the U.S. aggression" movement of the people's armed forces, the "produce well, fight well" movement of the workers and peasants, the "three ready's" movement of the youth, the "three responsibilities" movement of the women, and the "three determinations" movement of the intellectuals. Let the great rear area forge ahead and be worthy of the heroic great front!

In the crucible of the war against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has shown with greater clarity its great vitality and capacity, and is now in a better shape than ever, surging forward with the mettle of the victor, unceasingly growing stronger and developing its mighty effect to bring the resistance against U.S. aggression to complete victory and at the same time, making active preparations to solve major problems of socialism, the future problems of our people and country.

THE FIGHT ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT

Dear comrades and friends,

THE new period is also one in which our people are intensifying their fight against U.S. aggression on three fronts: military, political and diplomatic.

The diplomatic struggle which is being waged in Paris between the representative of our Government and that of the U.S. Government, has shed more light on the obduracy of the U.S. aggressors: they try to shirk the responsibility for their policy and acts of aggression against our country; they try to balk this obvious responsibility by means of a most absurd charge: "aggression by the North against the South", and on this ground they brazenly demand "reciprocity"! In Paris, the representative of our Government has disposed of thoroughly and with well-established facts the schemes, manoeuvres as well as the deceitful quibbles of the U.S. imperialists, thereby bringing a clearer realization to the public in the world and in the United States of the stubbornness of the U.S. administration which, in pursuance of its scheme of aggression, is challenging common sense, reality and history.

Moreover, in Paris we are insisting on a very legitimate and well-founded demand which will have a positive effect on the gradual achievement of a political settlement for the Viet Nam problem, that is U.S. unconditional ending of its bombing raids and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

Everyone in our country and the world still remembers well the process of the U.S. imperialists' aggression against our country: right after the Geneva Conference, the United States feverishly intervened in South Viet Nam and this intervention soon became a war of aggression in the South in violation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam and all norms of international law. This act, by its nature and consequences, is a flagrant, undeniable and very serious act of war. However, the U.S. imperialists did not confine it to South Viet Nam. Battered in the South, they sought to escalate their attacks into the North. They staged a deceitful and odious farce, which they called "the Tonkin Gulf incident" of August 3, 1964, as a pretext for launching air attacks against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam on August 5, 1964. Then, in February 1965, they started throwing massively their air and naval forces into a war of destruction against

General view of the meeting

the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, allegedly in "retaliation" for the attacks by the South Viet Nam Liberation Army in Pleiku and the High Plateaux. Their logic is merely a gangster's logic. In fact, they had long been making preparations for a war of aggression against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, an independent and sovereign country, in an attempt to make good their defeats in the South. However, to deceive public opinion and to cover up their dark schemes, they had engineered "the Tonkin Gulf incident" and concocted the story of "retaliation" against the attack in Pleiku. More blatant still, they have made up the utterly absurd "aggression by the North against the South" charge, and they are sticking to this senseless accusation to justify their war against North Viet Nam, to shirk their responsibility for their policy and acts of aggression against our country, and at the same time to ask for "reciprocity" and to refuse to stop unconditionally the U.S. bombing and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. It is necessary to look more deeply into the innermost ambition of the U.S. aggressors; they still want to pursue and intensify the war to fulfil their pre-conceived design: clinging to the South, prolonging the partition of our country. For these reasons, the Paris talks are being utilized by them only to appease public opinion in the world and in the United States, and to conceal their policy and acts of aggression. That is why, though short of arguments and with their back to the wall, they are still very obdurate.

In sharp contrast to the American side's, the position and attitude of the representative of our Government at the Paris talks is correct and serious. He has brought home to public opinion in the world and in the United States the very fundamental issues of the war: as the U.S. government has launched the war of aggression in Viet Nam, both in the South and in the North, it must bear full responsibility for its act and its crimes and consequences. These issues must be made unmistakably and unconfusedly clear so that correct solutions might be found to end the war and restore peace.

The U.S. aggressors can by no means evade their heavy responsibility.

As the United States has brazenly invaded our country, it must, as an immediate step toward the settlement of the war, meet the legitimate demand of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, namely to stop unconditionally its bombing raids and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam; it must withdraw all U.S. and satellite troops from South Viet Nam, recognize the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and enter into negotiations with the Front on problems of concern to the two sides in South Viet Nam. The Vietnamese people deeply cherish peace, but that must be a genuine peace associated with independence and freedom, not a 'Pax Americana.'

All the points explained above concerning the settlement of the Viet Nam problem are in conformity with the gist of the four points of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Political Programme of the National Front for Liberation, as well as with the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam.

WORLD-WIDE SUPPORT TO OUR STRUGGLE IS CONTINUALLY GROWING

THE just position of our people which has found expression in our unflinching struggle on the military, political and diplomatic fronts is enlisting more and more sympathy and support from the peoples of the world.

The world's support to our people has not only broadened and strengthened but also become more profound, more steadfast and more effective. Millions of people on the globe, from all sections, become increasingly clear about the nature of the war: on the part of the U.S., it is an aggressive war that runs counter to all norms of morality and law, a criminal war; as far as the Vietnamese people are concerned, it is a patriotic war, a just war having great international significance and bound to win complete victory.

From this appraisal of the nature of the problem, the world's peoples have been giving growing support to Viet Nam in her resistance against U.S. aggression: support to our military and political struggles on the battlefield, support to our diplomatic struggle at the Paris talks, support to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation.

Following the two sessions of the Bertrand Russell International War Crimes Tribunal, which have had wide and deep repercussions in the world, an event marking a new development in the international movement to support Viet Nam is the splendidly successful World Lawyers' Conference on Viet Nam held last July in Grenoble. The Conference made a systematic legal study of all aspects of the Viet Nam war, and concluded by voicing full support to the certainly victorious struggle and the just and principle-like position of our people, laying bare and condemning the obstinate and deceitful contentions of the U.S. imperialists at the Paris talks. The documents issued by the Grenoble Conference provide a firm legal basis for the struggle of the world's peoples in support of our people to completely defeat the U.S. aggressors. What was particularly gratifying for us was the active contribution by the American lawyers to the success of the Grenoble Conference.

The Viet Nam war helps the world's peoples realize more deeply the nature of U.S. imperialism which is aggressive and bellicose, is indulging in intervention and subversion everywhere, and is the most dangerous enemy of all nations. Consequently, as universal support to Viet Nam increases and broadens, it strengthens its links with the struggle of the people in each country for their fundamental rights. This finds a clear illustration in the situation of the United States where Viet Nam has become the question number one in the political life, the key issue in the present presidential election campaign, and the watchwords "stop the aggressive war in Viet Nam," "bring U.S. troops home" have increasingly become the pressing and vital demands of progressive Americans, and slogans that strongly appeal to broad sections of the American people.

For their part, our people highly value, and are grateful for, the noble support given us by the peoples of the world, and as a tribute, we pledge ourselves to stiffen our fighting will and our resolve to fight and defeat the U.S. aggressors, thereby discharging our internationalist duty.

Our people are deeply aware that our victories cannot be dissociated from the very great and valuable support and assistance of the socialist countries. So, the bigger our victories, the deeper we engrave in our hearts our sincere gratitude to the peoples of the fraternal socialist countries. We are very glad to note that by our side and together with us in the fight to defeat the U.S. imperialist aggressors, over one thousand million people of the socialist countries are fulfilling their internationalist obligation to our people—the fighters standing firm in the forefront defending the socialist camp and resolved to accomplish their internationalist duty.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Vietnamese people have always done their utmost to preserve and strengthen the solidarity between our country and the fraternal socialist countries on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, which we consider a principle-like international duty of a socialist country. We are of the view that the union of all socialist countries into a great family to form the world socialist system is the greatest achievement of the revolutionary struggle of the working class, the labouring people and the oppressed peoples in the world and that these countries stand out as the bulwark of the revolution and world peace. That is why, our people are filled with great joy and enthusiasm when socialism records a new victory and with deeply concern when socialism faces a threat in any part of the world. At present, it is clear that the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is facing a serious danger at a time when the U.S. imperialists and the West German revanchists are feverishly interfering in Czechoslovakia, colluding with the Czechoslovak counter-revolutionaries in an attempt to do away with socialism in Czechoslovakia, turn it into a capitalist country dependent on the West, thus posing a threat to the security of the socialist countries in the Warsaw Treaty and to peace in Europe and the world. The fact that the very existence of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was at stake has required that the Soviet Union and four other socialist countries in Europe—Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Poland—take all measures including the use of military forces to frustrate the intervention of the U.S. imperialists and the West German revanchists joining hands with the counter-revolutionaries in Czechoslovakia, to defend socialism there, to defend the Czechoslovak Communist Party, to maintain the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the Warsaw Treaty and in the socialist camp and to safeguard peace in Europe and the world. We hope that the recent talks in Moscow between the leaderships of the Soviet Union and four other socialist countries and that of Czechoslovakia will have a positive effect on the situation in that country, and ensure the preservation of socialism there, of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, of the socialist camp, and safeguard security in Europe and peace in the world.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Vietnamese people have always respected the independence, sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia within her present frontiers, have always strictly respected the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos which the U.S. imperialists have been systematically violating in an attempt to turn Laos into a neo-colony and a springboard for aggression against Viet Nam. We unceasingly consolidate and develop the militant solidarity between Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos against the common enemy—the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Vietnamese people resolutely support the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America, always unite closely with the other peoples throughout the world and make our biggest contributions to peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.

EVER MORE SPLENDID VICTORIES !

Esteemed President Ho Chi Minh,

Dear comrades and friends,

Dear fellow-countrymen and fighters,

TO bring to a glorious end the protracted resistance U.S. aggression for national salvation, we must strengthen the will of our people, a heroic nation. This will has found its expression in the statements of President Ho Chi Minh, in the Declaration of Independence, and in the appeals that have aroused every heart and resounded throughout the country. It is the will of those who have become masters of their own destiny, who not only are resolved to fight and to win, but also know how to fight and to win. It is the will of the fighters of our time, of the revolutionary cause of the working class, of the labouring people and all oppressed nations fighting against imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism, for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism. It is the will of people armed with the invincible Marxist-Leninist doctrine: Forward to victory over the enemy; in this fierce struggle, the proletariat and oppressed peoples lose only their fetters, and conquer a whole world.

Our people are therefore more than ever elated and confident. Has our Fatherland ever been so beautiful as now? Have our people ever recorded such extraordinary feats of arms? Our people have reached new peaks of revolutionary heroism, fighting for their own great cause and for the great cause of progressive mankind, and always achieving splendid successes. The new period, the new victories bigger than ever in the fierce and ardous fight require from our nation as a whole, and from every Vietnamese, enthusiasm and the most profound and firmest confidence. Not long ago, with our bare hands, but with our hearts filled with enthusiasm, we rose up against the enemy and got the better of him! Now, our forces are immense, the whole nation is up, all the 31 million Vietnamese are fighters to a man. Now, is there anything more powerful than our people's hatred for the U.S. aggressors and our resolve to fight and to win?

Fellow-countrymen and fighters throughout the country!

Let us march forward and defend the gains of the August Revolution, defend the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, liberate South Viet Nam, and gradually achieve the peaceful reunification of our country!

Victories move splendid than ever are ahead!